

“Sacred Time” - Luke 6:1-11
Pastor Burt Garwood – September 3, 2017

In 1894, after a period of violent riots and killings, our government decided to give our nation’s workers a day of rest, Labor Day, to add value to the fact that we need rest. Resting from work was a hotly contested issue back in Bible times too.

- God commanded his people to take one day, the Sabbath, Saturday, as a day off from work to rest and honor God in worship, the 3rd commandment.
- However, over time, the religious leaders made it into a monster that imprisoned the people.
- For example, if a man carried a needle in his cloak on the Sabbath, he was guilty of sewing. If he dragged a chair through a dirt floor and it dug into the ground leaving ruts, he was guilty of plowing. If he picked some grain in a field and rubbed it between his hands to break the outer shell, he was guilty of reaping and threshing. Travel was forbidden because it involved work. The Jews decided that you could walk a half mile before it was considered work and violating the sabbath law.

During his time on earth in human flesh, Jesus fought to restore the Sabbath to God’s original intent: Connection with God.

- READ: Luke 6:1-5. Jesus reminded them that sabbath was made to bless people, not enslave them.
- READ: Luke 6:9-10. The sabbath law had been so twisted that people weren’t allowed to help others be healed on the sabbath. Jesus enters a synagogue, and heals a man with a shriveled hand.
- READ: Luke 13:10-17. Without any hesitation, he heals her, right there in front of the religious leaders.
- Luke 13:17 *“When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.”*
- READ Luke 14:1-4. This time Jesus asks the question about healing on the sabbath and takes the Pharisee head on. This time, they have nothing to say. And he heals the man.
- Jesus pokes at them a little further. READ: Luke 14:5-6. They had nothing to say.
- READ: Mark 2:27 Jesus tells them that God made the sabbath for man’s benefit...that he didn’t make man to be a slave to sabbath rules.

What does this have to do with us today?

- Things haven’t changed much in terms of people feeling overworked today. One in three people report they are overworked. More than half of white collar workers log more than 40 hours per week. Only 37 percent of Americans take more than 7 days off a year. Americans take the shortest paid vacations in the world.

“We *need* time, as if God has not allotted to us all that we are meant to have. We *make* time, as if we had the power to create it. We *steal* time, as if we could add more to our lives. We *spend* and *use* time, as if it really were a commodity.” [Dan Allender, *Sabbath*]

The sabbath has been called a “Sanctuary in time.”

- It is not just an event that happens in time. It redefines time and how we live it. The sabbath marks the end of one week and the beginning of the next.
- We assume that time is fleeting and that we have to take hold of it. But time is beyond our reach and power to control. God doesn’t want us to try and control time, but to submit to it. The irony is that the more you try to control time, the more you are actually enslaved by it.

Have you ever lost a document you spent hours to create on your computer? I bet you said something like, “Look at all the time I lost.” Instead of seeing time as lost or gained, spent or used, simply honor it as a gift from God. Unless you submit to time, you can never fully enjoy God’s intentions for the sabbath...because you will try to make it something that God never intended.

“Time flies when you’re having fun.” I know you’ve been lost in the moment, in an activity that has your heart and mind so engaged, that you look at the clock and realize that hours have passed unnoticed. It’s one of the best feelings...to be caught up in the flow of time...enjoying life...God’s gift to us. That’s part of what it means to enjoy the sabbath on a weekly basis.

Do you remember what it felt like as a kid to shake the gift wrapped under the tree to see if you can discover what’s inside? Do you remember what it felt like to run downstairs in the early morning hours to wake your mom and dad to open presents? You were wide eyed...and your heart beat fast...and your little body twitched with excitement. Because you just couldn’t wait to enjoy Christmas. This is part of what it means to enjoy the sabbath on a weekly basis.

To anticipate the sabbath...and look forward to time with God. To receive the sabbath.

- To understand that working on the sabbath can take the joy away from play. That mundane tasks can take your focus away from God’s original intention for you to rest and find joy in friendship with him. It’s hard to be relational when you’re being task oriented. God is giving you a day off to play. To worship. To recalibrate. And reset your priorities.
- To protect the day. One of the best ways to protect the sabbath is to decide ahead of time how you will enjoy the day. “We will worship together...we will go to church...we will have family devotions together at home.”

But more than anything it’s this. READ: Matthew 11:28-29.

- Rest for your mind and body, yes. But rest ultimately for your soul.
- Jesus is talking about putting your trust in him so that you are free from the power of sin and that your soul finds rest. Sabbath is a window in time that allows us for one day a week to experience a slice of heaven...what our souls yearn for.
- The sabbath brings you back every week to what matters most: A saving faith in Jesus Christ.